

REMARKS

The Examiners, Mr. Ruhl and Ms. Anderson, are thanked for the courtesy of the interview granted Applicants' attorney on May 29, 2002.

During the course of the interview, a discussion was had concerning the prior art rejections of claims 1-3 based on *Yamamoto*. During the course of the interview the Examiners agreed that, if claim 1 was amended to define separate belts, rather than separate belt portions, then the independent claim 1 would distinguish over *Yamamoto*. Accordingly, the foregoing amendments to the claims reflect the agreement reached at the interview in order to distinguish claims 1-3 over *Yamamoto*.

Yamamoto discloses an absorbent pad having one unitary belt extending circumferentially around the edge of the pad and the waist of the wearer. It does not teach two separate belts that are fastened to the absorbent part. Accordingly, amended claim 1 is clearly patentable over *Yamamoto*. Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1, and are thus patentable over *Yamamoto*.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdrawal the outstanding rejections.

In the event that there are any questions concerning this response, or the application in general, the Examiner's respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney so that prosecution of the application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment to Amendment dated June 27, 2002

Mark-up of Claims 1-3

1. (Thrice Amended) A garment comprising an absorbent part and a waist belt which has a longitudinal direction and a cross-direction and which is attached directly or indirectly to said garment, wherein said belt includes two separate [belt-portions] belts which extend generally in said longitudinal direction, one end of each of the two separate [belt-portions] belts is fastened to the absorbent part, and opposite ends of each of the two separate [belt-portions] belts extend in respective directions from said absorbent part and are intended to be fastened together around a wearer of the garment, which [belt has] belts have a stiffness that varies in the cross-direction of the [belt] belts, wherein the stiffness that varies has an extension in the longitudinal direction that essentially coincides with the length of the [belt] belts.

2. (Thrice Amended) A garment according to claim 1, wherein the [belt comprises] belts comprise in [its] their cross-direction at least two mutually adjacent regions of mutually different stiffness.

3. (Thrice Amended) A garment according to claim 2, wherein the [belt has] belts have a longitudinally extending central part that is stiffer than at least one longitudinally extending edge-part of said [belt] belts.